

Message Text

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ORIGIN ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-02 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-15
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UNCLAS STATE 037633

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SNAR, PN

SUBJECT: WASHINGTON POST ARTICLE ON ATTORNEY GENERAL'S
APPEARANCE ON "ISSUES AND ANSWERS"

1. QUOTED BELOW IS THE TEXT OF A WASHINGTON POST ARTICLE
WHICH APPEARED ON FEBRUARY 13 RESULTING FROM ATTORNEY
GENERAL BELL'S APPEARANCE ON "ISSUES AND ANSWERS" (ABC)
ON FEBRUARY 12:

BEGIN QUOTE: ATTORNEY GENERAL GRIFFIN B. BELL SAID YESTER-
DAY HE KNOWS OF NO MATERIAL IN U.S. GOVERNMENT FILES THAT
WOULD IMPLICATE PANAMANIAN LEADER OMAR TORRIJOS IN ILLEGAL
DRUG DEALINGS.

BUT BELL DID SAY HE HAS SEEN MATERIAL IN DRUG ENFORCEMENT
ADMINISTRATION FILES THAT WOULD "INVOLVE" OR "REFLECT UPON"
MEMBERS OF TORRIJOS' FAMILY.

BELL, INTERVIEWED ON "ISSUES AND ANSWERS" (ABC, WJLA),
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SAID THAT "A LOT OF" THE EVIDENCE IS HEARSAY. PRESSED ON
WHETHER THERE WAS ANY "HARD PROOF" IN THE FILES, HE SAID,

"I DON'T KNOW. I AM NOT GOING TO SAY ANY MORE ABOUT IT
BECAUSE I WOULD HAVE TO TELL YOU EVERYTHING I KNOW ABOUT
IT AND IF I DID THAT THE SENATE COULD ABANDON THE IDEA
OF HAVING THE SESSION THEY ARE GOING TO HAVE."

THE SENATE, WHICH IS DEBATING THE PANAMA CANAL TREATIES,
HAS AGREED TO HOLD A SECRET SESSION FEB. 21 TO EXAMINE

ALLEGATIONS THAT TORRIJOS OR MEMBERS OF HIS FAMILY HAVE BEEN INVOLVED IN NARCOTICS SMUGGLING.

THE MOVE IS IN RESPONSE TO PRESSURE BY SEN. BOB DOLE (R-KAN.), WHO SAID HE HAS RECEIVED DEA FILES IMPLICATING TORRIJOS' RELATIVES IN DRUG TRAFFICKING.

ASKED ABOUT THE FILES DOLE MENTIONED, BELL SAID, "I THINK I HAVE SEEN THEM....IF THERE IS SOMETHING ELSE IT IS BEYOND ME; I DON'T KNOW ABOUT IT. BUT I CAN SAY THIS IN RESPONSE TO WHAT SEN. DOLE MAY HAVE SAID. HE AND I PROBABLY HAVE SEEN THE SAME THINGS. HE MIGHT DRAW A DIFFERENT CONCLUSION FROM IT."

BELL SAID OF THE MATERIAL ABOUT TORRIJOS' RELATIVES, "I AM NOT GOING TO AGREE TO THE WORD 'IMPLICATE'...I WOULD USE 'REFLECT UPON' OR 'INVOLVE'".

HE ADDED: "I SHOULDN'T SAY ANY MORE ABOUT IT. I THINK WE BETTER LET THE CONSTITUTIONAL PROCESSES WORK THEIR WAY." UNQUOTE. VANCE

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<< END OF DOCUMENT >>

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